

**Director Mark Cowin's Remarks for the Release of
Executive Order B-37-16 ~~ Making Water Conservation a California Way of Life**
Department of Water Resources, May 9, 2016

- Between 2012 and 2015, California has endured the driest four consecutive water years on record.
- And the effects of drought have been significant:
 - Reservoirs dropped, wells dried up, rivers turned too warm for salmon, and the mountains simply absorbed the meager snowmelt.
 - Farmers fallowed more than half a million acres of farmland.
 - Some rural communities lost their wells to sinking water tables. Many families were forced to depend on bottled and hauled water.
- This drought has taught us that while we as Californians enjoy some of the most diverse and bountiful natural resources in the world, we can't take water for granted, and we've got more work to do to ensure every Californian has access to clean, safe water supplies.
- That realization seemed to inspire Californians across the state - even in communities where water supplies never ran short.
- We ought to be proud of their collective response to this drought.
 - Millions of people changed their behavior in ways big and small, from being a little more careful in how much we watered our lawns, to replacing a washer in a leaking faucet. Many went the extra mile and put a bucket in the shower and lugged it to the yard to water their gardens.
 - I think most of us would agree that our water savings efforts were not a huge sacrifice and did not compromise our comfort or well-being.
- If we can permanently recalibrate our habits and invest in the landscaping and appliances that don't need much water to look good or work well – then we will stretch our supplies tremendously.
- Even better if we find efficiencies not just in our homes but also our farms, hospitals, factories, hotels, stores, restaurants, and office buildings.
- That's what the Executive Order issued by the Governor this morning is all about – converting our emergency response into an abiding ethic.
- This administration's approach to water policy recognizes the need for integration - from addressing water supply reliability, protecting water quality, managing floods and drought, and providing for the needs of fish and wildlife. All of our actions must work together.

- We recognize that it will take a multitude of projects, most of them local or regional, to satisfy the state's future water needs. It will require cooperation across boundaries and disciplines so that water supply projects provide multiple benefits, such as managing floodwaters, reusing water, and enhancing the environment.
- But the first tenet of this integrated approach is to stop water waste wherever possible. And it's tough to save what you can't track.
- This Executive Order reflects a commitment to efficiency and the collection of the data we need to know that we're getting more efficient.
- Much of what's in the Executive Order cannot be implemented immediately. But DWR and the Water Board will together build a framework for carrying out this Executive Order, and by the end of the year, we'll report to the Governor's Office on what we think we need in terms of additional resources and legislative authority to implement the elements of this order.
- In building this framework, we intend to apply the approach taken in the widely supported Sustainable Groundwater Management legislation, passed by the legislature in 2014.
 - Specifically, at the State level, we intend to set standards and targets for local government and local water agencies in carrying out their responsibilities for drought response planning and water conservation. Those standards and targets will avoid a cookie cutter approach and be tailored to the specific conditions of all of California's diverse regions and communities.
 - With goals in place, we would seek to allow significant flexibility in how local governments achieve meet their responsibilities. Our goal will be to support the efforts of local government and local water agencies, and reserve enforcement action at the State level for those that refuse to cooperate or exhibit chronic failure to meet requirements.
- We'll seek public input in coming months as we prepare a draft plan for carrying out many elements of this Executive Order. This is the start of an intensive effort for the Brown Administration, working with all affected entities, to craft an implementable, enduring plan that that will ensure that we use water efficiently, whether conditions are wet or dry, and are prepared for the longer and more severe drought cycles that we know are in California's future.

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